



Science and Tech

AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

ALTHOUGH IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED THAT THOSE WHO SET EDUCATIONAL POLICY MUST UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENCE OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THIS RELATIONSHIP IS UNDERMINED OR EVEN STRENGTHENED BY THE COUNTRY THAT MANAGES IT?

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Dialectical discussions appear to vary from leaders within different educational systems. For example, in the U.K., conversations around new technology fires imagination and elicits deep excitement, whereas education leaders in the middle east tend to feel apprehension and shift focus to the ‘dark side’ of technology. Therefore, it is practical to promote an understanding of the subject, the connection between information technology, social control, and power regimes.

Firstly, technology presents a learning environment culture and a pattern of communication and thinking; all these precede the social order of the classroom. The concept of ‘speech’ is no longer confined to a spoken conversation and is often used on virtual platforms. This paradigmatic change serves as a new way the general population view world functions, thus, technology companies become a mediator in learning.

Despite a collaborative goal of eliminating illiteracy, there are tensions between those states who operate top-down sovereignty and the contrastingly vertical moving technology giants. For example, Google China, a subsidiary of Google was welcomed at its launch in 2000 and reached 37% market share of a population of 1.3 billion, however, in 2006 government officials began a campaign to censor the content on Google in the belief that it would promote internal ventures rather than international ones.

Google refused to cooperate with China’s Great Fire Wall (GFW) mission and in 2009, their video sharing platform, YouTube, was banned from the country. This period saw the rise of social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, and to operate successfully in China, companies had to adhere to IP blocking, DNS spoofing, URL filtering, and VPN blocking, in addition to restricting any content that criticized the state or **its leaders**.

Those who were seen as not compliant with Chinese laws were banned (Google, Facebook, Wikipedia, Twitter), and those who could be nurtured and influenced by the state flourished (WeChat, Sina Weibo, Alibaba, Baidu, Soso).

This state-controlled attitude elicits arguments about free speech and market capitalization, nevertheless, when the two agendas align, there is a benefit for education through coproduction, such as QQ (China’s equivalent to Skype). QQ is a service developed by Tencent alongside the Chinese government and is commonly used in most Chinese universities; online video platforms should provide a huge advantage for educators however there is a disconnect with educators in the U.K.

Likewise, there have been struggles for both the EU and the USA in managing privacy laws with Google and Facebook. Nevertheless, the U.K does evidence successful TEL despite complex variables at play such as The Open University (OU).

Whilst there are challenges relating to privacy, ‘technology as a solution’ is an idea that is embraced within Israel’s educational technology policy. Social science leaders argue that it is the labor market that plays a major part in designing the future curriculum, a direction that symbolizes societal considerations in educational policy.

In other words, new technology is often welcomed into classrooms, and this is partly because most of the development work is carried out by teacher-entrepreneurs, complementing pedagogical aspects of TEL by being firmly embedded in teacher training. When compared to teacher training in the U.K., there is an absence of innovation in the Teachers’ Standards. The introduction of the Teachers’ Standards in 2012 has always received criticism for being ‘too subjective’ and relying too much on ‘verbs that have to be modified to measure progress’. In a TEL context, this lack of guidance linking pedagogy and TEL often means it is left out.

Like several sectors, the education sector is experiencing rapid internationalization. In particular, there is a growing number of students from developing economies studying degrees in the West, enrolling either as international students at Western Universities or in institutions in their home country with partnerships with a Western University.

The globalization of education goes hand in hand with an increase in distance learning programs, and this is supported by developing internet-based electronic learning (e-learning) systems. E-learning systems combat barriers to learning such as time and space, although the success of these systems depends on the extent of student acceptance. The benefit of educational institutions, especially in the U.K. making this service available to their distance learning students, is that the very best from across the globe can reap the rewards of having a degree. For example, Chinese business managers are now pursuing Executive MBAs in the U.K. whilst being based in China, and Universities also benefit from the added strength to their research community.



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